



FACILITATORS MANUAL

the official reference on the use of the
Compatibility Communication System

[SECOND EDITION]

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CCS GROUP PROCESSES

Widely applicable and frequently liberating
step-by-step processes for eliciting a
common set of ideals from groups.

The CCS group process is a widely applicable and frequently liberating step-by-step method for eliciting a common set of ideals from groups and teams.

There are two principal applications of the group process:

- team building and team development
- creating the ‘need to know’ in training and education programs.

While the basic steps are the same for both applications, the emphasis on certain steps and the type of questions asked during the process differ somewhat. So, after mapping out the general process we will look at the specific applications separately.

In all situations the group process begins with the individual and works outwards – via small sub-groups – towards the whole group. The aim is to maximise the contribution of ideas through interaction and dialogue and to secure personal and emotional commitment from all members of the group.

Note: we find that there is a tendency to believe that there is not sufficient time to allow for a complete process in corporate programs. This may well be so in some circumstances, but we emphasise that facilitators should not underestimate the efficiency and power of embedding a full CCS process in a program of work. It is our opinion that what may be ‘lost’ in time is easily recovered in quality of experience, engagement and application.

We will first consider the general steps in the process and then detail its application in team development and training & education programs.

The CCS group processes have 6 steps:

1. the opener
2. individual lead-up topic(s)
3. group vision topic
4. tighten the vision
5. the closer
6. transfer activity.

1. the opener

An opportunity to build rapport between the facilitator and participants and between the participants themselves. The opener sets a non-threatening tone and establishes the level of participation and disclosure that is expected during the process.

2. individual lead-up topics

There are usually one or two individual lead-up topics. Lead-up topics give participants an opportunity to bring their personal experience, from almost anywhere in their lives, to the group, and ultimately to the subject of the session. Lead-ups also aim to create *visual gaps* for the participants by having them build an image of where they are at present and contrasting that with where they would like to be. Visual gaps can act as a motivation to change and to commit to the outcomes of the session.

It is imperative that lead-ups be carried out by individuals with their own CCS vision pack. Participants will be asked to share their responses with people around their table and around the room and must be able to compare and contrast their choices with others in the group.

It is preferable that one of the lead-ups (usually the second when there are two) follows the *CCS visualisation technique* (see fundamental 4). This helps to ensure that individuals access their tacit knowledge of the subject and provide a response based on feelings, emotions, personal ideals and lived experience.

3. group vision topic

The vision topic is a carefully worded statement or question that represents the main focus of the session. We use the term *vision* to describe this step in the process as a general term for: 'visual collage', 'mental picture', 'idea', 'image', 'visualisation'. The group is being asked to create a visual collage that represents the main ideas associated with the topic.

A good vision topic is simple and active eg 'the ideal manager', 'our team in one year', 'key success factors for our team', 'qualities of a compelling place to work', 'excellent customer service', 'the way we do things', 'what matters most'.

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The vision topic is always done in small groups or table teams. Each small team selects a number of cards that they believe best represent the vision topic for their group. They record their reasoning alongside each image. Each small group then reports back to the whole group.

4. tighten the vision – making meaning

The whole group now examines the variety of image cards and associated meanings that have been chosen by all participants and seeks to reduce the choices to a *tight* meaningful set.

Tightening is a crucial step in drawing the whole team together around a common set of ideals. It is the step in which the group creates the meaning of the topic area. In many instances this step will prove to be the most important moment in the process - the moment when the group takes control and works together to define a unique, relevant vision of the topic. When tightening is done well, individuals, table-teams and ultimately the whole group will be able to see and feel themselves included in the final vision collage - a feat not easily achieved with a word-only process.

The role of the facilitator in this step is to 'step back' and allow the group to discuss, debate and refine their choices and associated meanings. This is most easily done by laying the chosen CCS jumbo vision pack cards on the floor (or table) and having the group gather around them. The facilitator may need to offer guidance and redirection from time to time, but relegates the decisions to the group.

Applying the vision – in certain sessions it is necessary to direct the group at this point to add measurable action steps to each of the tightened vision components or otherwise apply the elements before moving to the closer.

5. the closer

The group process is usually *closed* in one of three ways:

commit to the vision – each participant selects one CCS card from their vision pack to highlight one thing they will personally do from this moment on to move forward in the direction of the vision.

appreciation – in certain sessions, particularly team building, it is valuable to close the session by having team members individually

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THE PRACTICE OF
SHARED VISION
INVOLVES THE SKILLS
OF UNEARTHING
SHARED 'PICTURES OF
THE FUTURE' THAT
FOSTER GENUINE
COMMITMENT AND
ENROLMENT RATHER
THAN COMPLIANCE.

The CCS can be used to make shared 'visions' a part of any group development experience.

appreciating one another and identifying individuals that have displayed any of the qualities or behaviours present in the tightened vision. This creates an immediate camaraderie and sense of moving forward.

the need to know – if the group process is being used as part of a training or education program, the facilitator concludes the process by linking the resultant vision collage to the main content of the education program and creates the need to know to engage a group to learn.

6. transfer activity

Participants keep their CCS vision pack and are directed to carry out one or more transfer activities following the session.

These activities are designed to reinforce and ensure transfer of the learning outcomes from the session to participants' workplace and personal lives.

A CCS vision collage created by two merging teams following the 'ideal team – best of both' group process. In this case the facilitator chose to rename the vision topic to "the way we do things".

